

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L KUWAIT 005045

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/ARP, INR/B, INR/NESA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/29/2013

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [KU](#)

SUBJECT: (U) SHAYKH NAWAF UPGRADED TO "FIRST DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER"

Classified By: AMB. RICHARD H. JONES; REASON 1.5 (B,D)

1. (C) SUMMARY: Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Shaykh Nawaf al-Ahmed al-Jaber al-Sabah, half-brother to both the Amir and the Prime Minister, has just been officially elevated to First Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister. This changes nothing in practice, but cements the authority of Prime Minister Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmed. As Nawaf is not a strong figure, he poses no threat to Sabah. His elevation helps keep at bay the elder shaykhs of the rival Salem line, without unduly threatening the younger generation. END SUMMARY.

2. (U) On October 26, an Amiri Decree elevated Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Shaykh Nawaf al-Ahmed al-Jaber al-Sabah to First Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister. Shaykh Nawaf is a half-brother of both the Amir and the Prime Minister, though all three had different mothers. (Note: there are two other DPMs: the Defense Minister, who is also a member of the ruling family, and the Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs and Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs, who is not. End Note.) In practice, Shaykh Nawaf was already functioning as de facto First DPM. It was he, for instance, who attended our national day reception on October 13. In the official protocol order of state, he outranked the other DPMs.

3. (C) This move cements the authority of Prime Minister Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmed al-Jaber al-Sabah. For one thing, it underscores the separation of the position of Prime Minister from that of Crown Prince. (Note: from independence until this past July, the Crown Prince was always Prime Minister. Until being named Prime Minister in July, Shaykh Sabah was First DPM and Foreign Minister. End Note.) It also strengthens the hold of the Jaber branch of the ruling family.

4. (NF) Shaykh Nawaf, born in 1937, has a long history of government service (he was Defense Minister at the time of the Iraqi invasion; until his appointment in July, he was Deputy Commander of the National Guard) but is neither highly educated nor particularly sophisticated, and is not seen as a strong figure. Loyalty and bloodline appear to be his selling points: he presents no threat to Shaykh Sabah, and is not generally seen as a prospective Amir. Elevating him helps to keep at bay the elder shaykhs of the Salem line, without unduly threatening the younger generation. (Background Note: the Amir must be a direct descendant of Mubarak the Great, but in practice all rulers since Mubarak have come from the lineage of only two of his sons, Jaber and Salem, and almost always alternately. The aged and ailing Crown Prince is a Salem, as are National Guard Commander Shaykh Salem al-Ali al-Salem al-Sabah -- who actually outranks the Prime Minister in the protocol of state -- and Chairman of the National Committee for Missing and POW Affairs Shaykh Salem Sabah al-Salem al-Sabah, who outranks Nawaf. Foreign Minister Shaykh Dr. Mohammed Sabah al-Salem al-Sabah, Shaykh Salem's younger half-brother, is widely seen as a leading candidate for the top spot. Still in his forties, he currently ranks 14th out of 16 in the Cabinet. End Note.)  
JONES